

# EXHIBIT 6

to the

MOTION *IN LIMINE* NO. 4 OF DEFENDANT CBS3 TO PRECLUDE  
REFERENCES TO GUIDELINES OF OTHER NEWS ORGANIZATIONS

# Ethics | Society of Professional Journalists

Why doesn't SPJ enforce its Code of Ethics?

The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics is voluntary. We do not have a mechanism for investigating complaints or enforcing discipline on SPJ members, much less other journalists. But our code does provide a framework to evaluate ethical behavior, and we encourage fellow journalists and the public to hold news reports and commentary up to ethical scrutiny. Ultimately, that is the most effective antidote to questionable reporting, not quasi-judicial proceedings. The reasons for this emphasis are rooted in the special nature of journalism and the need to preserve freedom of expression and an independent press.

The Society's leadership has debated the question of enforcement off and on for decades. The majority has felt that establishing a quasi-judicial system, such as those found in some other professions, would inevitably lead to actions by governments, courts or their proxies that would restrict the rights to free speech and free press guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Preserving those rights is a fundamental mission of SPJ — every bit as important to its members as sound ethics — and we don't want the pursuit of the one to have a negative effect on the other. American citizens' constitutional rights to free speech and a free press are vulnerable, and they are placed in jeopardy whenever we allow them to be confused with or limited by the professional responsibility to act ethically. Instead, we encourage the exposure of unethical journalism as a means for rooting it out; more speech is the most effective counter measure.

In addition, as a practical matter, professional enforcement of standards for news reporting would require a body of more detailed provisions and case law that are far beyond our resources to provide, even if it were desirable.

Nor could any set of rules, however detailed, possibly apply to all the nuances and ambiguities of legitimate expression. Rather, we are committed to encouraging the profession and the public to evaluate all reporting and reportage in ethical terms, not to apply "rules." We believe our code provides the guidelines to make that possible.

We realize — and have embodied in our code — that all journalism ethics is a balancing act between often conflicting responsibilities. One of our guiding principles, whose importance we all recognize, is "Seek truth and report it." Another is "Minimize harm." Obviously, if one reports all truths without flinching, we will inevitably do great harm, and if one minimizes harm as much as possible, one will not be reporting essential truths. The key is in the balancing act — and in recognizing the importance of

each core value. That's not easy to enforce.

Similar conflict exists between our other two basic principles, "Act independently" and "Be accountable."

So the Society has long felt that the best enforcement is in publicizing, explaining and applying those principles and weighing alternatives, as individuals, as journalists and as an organization, in the form of comment and opinion, without issuing definitive, quasi-legal judgments that might be put to improper use. Our hope is that the public and other journalism professionals will have in our code the tools necessary to evaluate journalism behavior and hold journalists ethically accountable for their actions. Indeed, the code specifically calls on journalists to "clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public over journalistic conduct," to "encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media" and to expose unethical practices of journalists and the news media."

SPJ's Code of Ethics has proved to be an important reference for professionals, students and citizens. It is widely consulted and applied in newsrooms and classrooms as the definitive statement of our profession's highest values and a helpful way to think about the specific and unique journalism quandaries we confront daily.

The Society has taken measures to encourage broader use of the code. We have disseminated the text widely and organized countless programs to assess ethical issues, and we have entered into a partnership with Bloomberg to teach ethics to professionals. We have established Ethics in Journalism Week as a means of placing a spotlight on our ethical responsibilities and reaching out to the communities we serve with information on what citizens have a right to expect from journalists. We also regularly make ourselves available to the news media to comment about demonstrably good and notably bad ethical practices and the complex evaluation of responsibilities that ethical behavior demands.

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When was the code adopted?

The present version of the code was adopted during Excellence in Journalism 2014, [following months of study and debate among the Society's members](#). Sigma Delta Chi's first Code of Ethics was borrowed from the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1926. In 1973, Sigma Delta Chi wrote its own code, which also was revised in 1984, 1987 and 1996.

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For more information about SPJ's Code of Ethics, write to [ethics@spj.org](mailto:ethics@spj.org).

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